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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
IN
TEXTUAL CRITICISM

BY

ALBERT C. CLARK

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TEXTUAL CRITICISM

AN INAUGURAL LECTURE
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BY
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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TEXTUAL CRITICISM

THE first duty which I have to discharge on the present occasion is to refer, however shortly, to the great scholar who has passed away. Professor Ellis was so well known in Oxford that I can leave much unsaid. There is, however, one aspect of his character which may not be so familiar to many of my audience as it was to myself. I refer to his power of making friends and keeping them. I feel that I have some right to speak on this subject since I first made his acquaintance some thirty-five years ago, and our friendship was never dimmed by any cloud. Most of Robinson Ellis's friends had been at one time his pupils. It may at first seem strange that one who seemed to move in a world of his own, who was so absent-minded and so short-sighted, should have been able to secure the affection of undergraduates for so many generations. The secret of his power lay in the fact that he liked young men, and that they never felt shy with him. This was due to his simplicity, his want of reserve and his physical infirmities. He had a confiding way of taking a young friend by the arm, as if in need of support, while he complained of his lameness and weak sight, which made his companion conscious that he too had something to give.

Robinson Ellis had a large conception of scholarship which is more familiar now than it was when he was

young. Nowhere was the art of composition practised more successfully than in the English Universities, nowhere was the spirit of the Classics more appreciated. But from research as practised in Germany England held aloof. Robinson Ellis was himself a great stylist, but his sympathies were with the German method. To him research and progress were the vital issues, and it caused him pain to think that Oxford was lagging behind the age. It is of interest now to read a letter which he wrote to the University Commissioners in 1877. He there said :

'I regard it as a matter of very great consequence that the University should be known on the Continent as contributing materially to enlarge the sphere of philology.'

The point on which he insisted most was the necessity of going to the MSS. He said :

'During the last thirty years all or nearly all the principal contributions to an enlarged knowledge of Greek and Latin authors have been based on an investigation of MSS. of a minute and laborious kind unknown before. It has been my aim as a scholar to show that research in this department of Philology is not confined to the Continent, and that Englishmen are able to appreciate the treasures which lurk in their national collections.'

This was the central fact in his teaching, and it is his message to posterity. He was himself tireless in the quest for MSS., in spite of physical weakness and feeble sight. He made several notable discoveries, though with characteristic modesty he sometimes undervalued the new material which he had brought to light. It must be conceded that his collations were not always exact, but it is marvellous that he should have been able to do so much with his weak eyes. He had to struggle against a handicap which would have prevented

most men from engaging in serious study, and his perseverance was a proof of indomitable fortitude.

In the range of his learning he resembled the polymathic scholars of the sixteenth century. Nothing written in Latin was without interest to him, from Plautus down to Maximianus or Mico the Levite. He had a marvellous fund of erudition gathered from out of the way sources, e.g. Glossaries, of which he had made a special study. To him a Scholiast was almost sacred. Some members of the Philological Society may remember how once, when the statement of a Scholiast was impugned, he said with some emotion, 'Do I understand that Mr. X wishes to vilipend the Scholiast?'

There are two criticisms which have been brought against Robinson Ellis. The first concerns his choice of subjects. It is true that, after editing the great poet with whom his name is inseparably connected, he left the beaten track. He was like a great surgeon who confines himself to difficult operations. He was chiefly attracted by works which are exceedingly obscure, either on account of their subject-matter or of their corrupt text. He did much to enlarge the horizon of English scholarship. Thus, for instance, the interest now taken in Manilius is largely due to his influence. The second criticism concerns his tendency to super-subtlety, both in exegesis and in conjecture. This tendency cannot be denied, and it is not surprising that his fancy sometimes ran riot, in view of his solitary life and self-absorption. On the other hand he shows robust common sense when, in the Preface to his *Aetna*, he asserts the existence of the 'trained critical faculty', which he says is 'competent to reject the impossible in language, syntax or metre, however strongly it may be supported by early manuscript tradition and however

plausibly it may be shown to be quite explicable. There is a growing school of critics, not only in Germany but in England, the central point of whose creed is virtually to deny this.'

I will say no more. Posterity must decide his place in the hierarchy of scholarship. I venture to think that he will occupy a position beside his friend, H. A. J. Munro, as one of the great luminaries among English students of the Latin Poets in the nineteenth century.

I now turn to the subject of this lecture. I fear that it is somewhat technical in character, and possibly many of my hearers might have wished that I had selected some theme of more general interest. I can only plead in defence that it is difficult to say anything which is at all new upon a literary subject, while in the field of criticism there are some interesting developments.

The first duty of a critic is to be critical, and criticism tends to be subjective and sceptical. I wish to speak with all respect of the great scholars of the past, into the fruit of whose labours we have entered. Also, I do not wish for a moment to imply that their methods were unscientific. The greatest scholars at all periods have been keenly aware that the basis of textual criticism is to be found in palaeography. They were, however, somewhat prone to insist upon another element, viz. $\deltaεινότης$ on the part of the critic. Thus the great Bentley proclaimed *nobis et ratio et res ipsa centum codicibus potiores sunt*, and it has been said of him that he treated his MSS. in a masterful way much 'as if they had been Fellows of Trinity'. The methods of modern criticism are more humble and in a way more mechanical. The workman cannot exercise his work without tools, and with the growth of information more delicate instruments have been forged.

In the first place let us take the subject of palaeography. In former days it was not so easy to travel, and frequently libraries were reluctant to display their treasures. Thus so late as 1846, when Tregelles wished to consult the celebrated Vatican MS. of the New Testament (*B*), he was only allowed to look at it here and there, while two priests talked Latin to him all the time and snatched the volume out of his hands when he tried to take notes. Tischendorf in 1866 was only granted a few days in which to collate it, and was expelled from the library when it was found that he was copying continuous passages. I mention this, since no library is now administered with greater liberality than the Vatican. Also, photography has come to our aid. We now possess large collections of facsimiles, also complete reproductions of the most important MSS. The rotograph process makes it possible for the student to get at slight expense a copy which for practical purposes is as good as the original.

The methods of Latin palaeography have been revolutionized by Traube and his school. The chief object now is the study of national and local scripts and the tabulation of the compendia used in various centres. This is a matter of great moment, since the writer in one *scriptorium* was frequently unfamiliar with abbreviations used in another. The Irish script is of supreme importance, since so many classical authors have come down to us from copies made by the Irish monks who founded monasteries on the Continent, notably at St. Gallen and Bobbio. This is a subject which Professor Lindsay has made his own, and we already have from him a number of works dealing with the local varieties of the Insular script and the development of Irish compendia in Continental writing-schools. Also, the South

Italian, or Beneventan, hand is of capital importance for the tradition of various classical authors, e.g. Tac. *Annals*, xi-xvi, Apuleius, Varro, Hyginus, various works of Cicero, while the new fragment of Juvenal, discovered in the Bodleian Library by Mr. Winstedt, while an Oxford undergraduate, was preserved in a Beneventan MS. Here I may mention as a typical example of modern method the masterly work of Dr. Loew upon the Beneventan script recently published by the Clarendon Press.

Next to palaeography I would mention the progress of historical research, which enables us to trace the movements of MSS. throughout the Middle Ages, and to construct their biography. For this purpose the mediaeval catalogues are invaluable. I will take a single example. The catalogue of Cluni, written in 1158-61, mentions:¹

- 492. Libri epistolarum Ciceronis ad Atticum xvi.
- 496. Cicero pro Milone et pro Avito et pro Murena et pro quibusdam aliis.
- 498. Cicero in Catilinam et idem pro Q. Ligario et pro rege Deiotaro et de publicis litteris et de actione idemque in Verrem.

The last of these was recently discovered in the Holkham Library, first by L. Dorez and independently by Dr. Peterson. It is a ninth-century MS., and still bears the library mark *de conventu Clun.* The second is the old Cluni MS. taken to Italy by Poggio in the fifteenth century and now lost, from which all copies of the *Murena* and *pro Sex. Roscio* are derived. From internal evidence it can be shown to have been not later than the eighth century. A very important MS.

¹ Manitius, *Philologisches aus alten Bibliothekskatalogen*, p. 15.

of the Letters to Atticus, the Tornaesonianus (*Z*), now lost, first came to light at Lyons, not far from Cluni. As MSS. of these Letters were very rare, and indeed this is the only mention of them in the old catalogues, No. 492 was doubtless the lost Tornaesonianus. If so, the MS. deserved the description of 'very ancient' given to it by Lambinus. This is important, since critics who suspect its readings have argued that it was a fifteenth-century MS. grossly interpolated. The results of countless monographs have been collected by Manitius in his *Geschichte der lateinischen Litteratur des Mittelalters*, while a similar service has been performed for the period of the Renaissance by Voigt and Sabbadini. I cannot here refrain from mentioning a bold guess recently made by R. Beer, which may throw light on the largest collection of ancient Latin MSS. now extant. I refer to the Bobbio palimpsests, written before the time of St. Columban. He points out singular coincidences between these and the contents of the library formed by Cassiodorus, the minister of Theodoric, at his Vivarium. Thus a Bobbio MS. preserves a fragment of Gargilius Martialis *De re rustica*, a work mentioned by Cassiodorus, while another is our sole authority for the grammarian Claudius Sacerdos, whose treatise was used by him, also a Latin Euclid, a copy of which he possessed.¹ We have now a large quantity of information concerning the transmission of Latin texts, and gaps are being continually filled up. Such researches have disposed of much sceptical criticism. Take for example the absurd fable that the *Annals* of Tacitus were forged by Poggio. We now know that the eleventh-century MS., which contains the later books, was used by Boccaccio before Poggio was born,

¹ *Akad. Wissenschaft*, Wien, 1911, pp. 78-104.

while the ninth-century MS., which contains the earlier books, was brought to Italy from Corvei in 1508, forty-nine years after his death. Indeed, we possess a letter of Pope Leo X, written to the Archbishop of Maintz, in which he refers to the MS., which appears to have been stolen from the monks of Corvei by his agents, and sends in return a printed copy, 'nicely bound', together with a 'perpetual Indulgence', to compensate them for their loss.¹

The evidence yielded by such researches is not favourable to the hypothesis of extensive interpolation. There appear to have been few periods when anything like criticism was published. Apart from the Renaissance, when fertile and ingenious critics were at work, there is only one perilous zone, that of the Caroline Renaissance in the eighth and ninth centuries. For some two centuries before this period few classical MSS. were copied. The state of orthography in particular was deplorable, owing to the growth of the Romance languages and corruptions due to mispronunciation. The classics were saved from destruction by Alcuin of York, and corrected editions were issued by more or less competent scholars working at Tours, Fulda and elsewhere. Barbarous spellings and gross blunders vanish, as if by magic. The question, therefore, arises, to what extent the Caroline scribes tampered with the texts which they transcribed.

Professor Shipley has done important work by his study of two MSS. of Livy, one of which was actually copied from the other at this period. The model was the celebrated Puteaneus of the fifth century (*P*); the copy (*M*) was made by eight monks belonging to Tours, who signed their names to the quaternions which they

¹ *Philologus*, xlvi, p. 378.

copied. Shipley well observes that in such a case 'it is possible to look over the shoulder of the mediaeval scribe as he sits at his task. One may follow his hand and eye as he copies letter by letter and word by word.' The general conclusion which he draws is that the errors are in the main due to mechanical causes, that 'the work shows almost no intentional alterations', and that the emendations are of the most superficial nature.

The mediaeval copyist was much in the position of the modern compositor who sets up something in a language of which he knows little or nothing. Sometimes he introduced the few words which he knew, e.g. *amen* for *tamen*, *Galilaea* for *Gallia*, *aeternus* for *externus*, but generally he copied with blind fidelity. The colophons attached to many MSS. throw light upon the writer's psychology. Sometimes he speaks of his labours, e.g.

'Tria digita scribunt
sed totum corpus laborat'.

Sometimes he refers to his want of skill, e.g.

'Sum scriptor talis, monstrat me littera qualis',
or wants his money, e.g.

'Finis adest operis, mercedem posco laboris',
or signifies his joy, e.g.

'Libro completo saltat scriptor pede laeto',
or says he would like something to drink, e.g.

'Finis adest libri: potum detur michi vini'.

Above the scribe there was the corrector, who stood in a similar relation to that occupied by the modern press reader. The average corrector does not show much sign of intelligence and confines himself to points of orthography, e.g. *maximus* or the substitution of *b* for *v*, e.g. *uerua* nec *bellica*.¹ The chief duty which he

¹ So *V* for *verba nec bellica*, Cic. *Phil.* viii. 6.

performs is to insert passages omitted by the first hand, either from the model or from some other MS. Sometimes we find at work a more intelligent critic who annotates the MS. with signs meant to point out corruptions, e. g. q(uaere), r(equire), ζ (=ζήτει), and gives variants in the margin from other MSS.

The oldest MSS. are full of undisguised corruptions due to mechanical causes, such as the repetition or anticipation of passages from the context. The same cause accounts for many omissions. This, however, is a subject which I shall treat later on. Many MSS. bear on them visible evidence of the lineation found in the model. The most striking point, however, which I would here notice is, that we find everywhere conflate words which show that there were alternate readings in the model. I refer to such an example as *quods*, a conflation of *quod^s*. These are especially common in the fifth-century MSS. of Livy. I have also found a number in the fourth-century palimpsest of Cicero, *De re publica*. Such combinations as *cultums*, *assiduum^smos*, *posset set*, *a rebrum* tell their own tale. Besides these minor variants we find others of greater importance, e. g. *liticinibus^{corni}*, *et suffragiis, ulla^ae . . . peruerterunt^{it}*, which must be traditional readings. I am convinced that a large number of ancient corruptions are due to misunderstanding caused by these doublets, and to the insertion of alternative readings in the wrong place. This is the sort of evidence which was removed by Caroline revisers, and it is chiefly here that we have to lament their activity.

I now go back to the papyri. These are mainly Greek, but the lesson which they teach is equally applicable to Latin. The subject was recently treated in a masterly lecture by Professor Hunt. The papyri

do not support the theory of the 'best MS.' on which most criticism has been based. What they show is that the readings of the inferior MSS. frequently have an equal claim to antiquity. Also, in the most ancient papyri we find double readings as in the Latin palimpsests. The general conclusion which he reaches is that on the whole the papyri confirm tradition. Although they establish a very large number of small corrections made by scholars, they lend no support to the theory of extensive adscripts and interpolations at a later date. Secondly, he considers that the chief corruptions belong to an early date before the rise of the Alexandrian critics. The chief evidence is in the case of Homer, but in other classical texts also he finds an increasing tendency to uniformity and stability, and considers the chief errors made afterwards due to mechanical causes, and especially to omission.

I pass lightly over this subject, since I am here concerned with Latin texts, not Greek. There are, however, several Latin papyri which have recently been discovered, among them being fragments of Cicero's speeches. The most important is a long piece of Cicero, *pro Caelio*, published in the last volume of *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. This speech offers some interesting problems to the textual critic. The chief extant authority for it and a number of other speeches is a Paris MS. (*P*), written during the Caroline period. In this the first hand omits a large number of passages which were subsequently added by the second hand. Such great scholars as Madvig and Halm looked on these additions with grave suspicion. There are also other passages which are only given by fifteenth-century MSS. These they regarded as audacious interpolations. Thus Madvig, after rejecting from the text in § 24 one of these readings,

which gives a perfect sense, marks the lacuna with two stars and a dagger, remarking :¹

*'Edendus est igitur necessario locus hoc tristi aspectu : Titus Caiusque * * † omni cum doctrina homo atque humanitatis.'*

Recently fresh evidence has come to light in the shape of a fifteenth-century collation, made from the Cluni MS. no. 496, before it was taken to Italy by Poggio, and now preserved in a Paris MS. (Σ).² This collation confirms the almost superhuman power of divination possessed by Madvig in the case of isolated passages, establishing on one page three consecutive conjectures made by him, one of which is an insertion of three words, but is entirely against him with regard to the suspected passages, all of which are vouched for by the Cluniacensis. The new papyrus as usual is eclectic and wavers between the two families, so far as minute differences are concerned. It is, however, consistent in its support of the doubtful passages, which are now brought back to the fifth century. It is, therefore, clear that their omission in *P* is due to accident. No better example could be found of the danger involved by following the 'best MS.' where it offers a shorter text.

The combined evidence seems to show that the *sciolus*, or the *mala manus*, that demon sometimes foolish, sometimes cunning, but always malignant, who was supposed to haunt the Dark Ages, was merely a phantom which has vanished in the daylight of further knowledge.

The discovery of papyri has been termed a divine judgement for sceptical critics. Their discomfiture has

¹ *Opuscula*, p. 393.

² *The vetus Cluniacensis of Poggio* (1905), p. 30.

been completed by a new weapon. I refer to the science of prose-rhythm.

The ancients tell us that prose, like verse, has its rhythm, and that this rhythm, while it pervades the sentence, is especially noticeable in the close (*clausula*) both of the sentence and of the clauses which compose the sentence. They tried to give rules and examples of particular rhythms, but met with little success. It is clear that they laboured under the same difficulties as we do now, when we try to analyse the rhythm of English. The secret, which was hidden to them, was revealed in the course of history, when the three chief rhythms became stereotyped in the shape of the mediaeval *cursus*.¹

Prose-rhythm was a system of musical punctuation. By this I mean that at the breaks in the sentence, where we place commas and colons, the ancient composer inserted a favourite cadence. This system can be illustrated from English, which, when it took over a number of Latin words, also inherited the Latin rhythms. The typical examples are *sérvants départed*, *pérfect felicity*, *glórious ùndertákning*. There are minor forms which I need not notice. We need only construct an English sentence in which these cadences occur in lieu of stops, wherever the voice halts, and we shall realize the nature of rhythmical prose.

The theory applies to Greek as well as to Latin Prose, from the time of Isocrates onwards, but in Greek the problem is more complicated. The fullest results have been obtained in the case of Cicero, whose *clausulae* have been tabulated and classified. Zielinski has constructed a canon for Cicero, giving the exact percentages which we should expect to find in a genuine

¹ *The Cursus in Mediaeval and Vulgar Latin* (1910).

work. We are now in possession of Cicero's thumb-marks, and can decide with certainty whether a suspected work is authentic, or not.

Here again we have to notice the bankruptcy of subjective criticism. From the time of Markland (1745) it was fashionable to reject as spurious the speeches *post reditum*. The objections were mainly based on matters of language and style. The speeches were termed weak, periphrastic, and unworthy of Cicero. Also, their Latinity was impugned. It is now shown that the *numeri* conform exactly to the Ciceronian canon. The artist's hand is attested by his private mark. So too Orelli rejected as spurious the speeches against Catiline ii–iv, supposing that they had been forged by Tiro. He went on to suggest that a passage in Cicero's Letters, in which he mentions them (Att. ii. 1, 3), was inserted by Tiro, in order to cover his forgery. This view was supported by linguistic reasons, such as the use of $\delta\pi\alpha\xi\lambda\epsilon\gamma\delta\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha$. This slashing criticism is now out of date.

On the other hand the new test proves that the spurious *Invective* against Sallust, which was already current in the time of Quintilian, is not genuine: also the spurious *Consolatio*, which is generally supposed to have been written by Siganus in the sixteenth century.

The conditions of textual criticism are now changed. Prose, as well as verse, has its metre, and the first duty of an editor is to learn the thumb-marks of his author. The results are both positive and negative: positive as serving to localize corruption, and negative when the suspected passage is protected by the rhythm. We have now an objective test, which can be applied to all conjectures affecting the clausula. I will take two instances. In Cicero, *Rosc. Am.* § 107 *iudices qui*

indicarit, Halm substitutes *quis* for *qui*, an alteration which looks very plausible. In Cat. iii. 22 *praesertim qui . . . superare potuerunt* Madvig reads *potuerint*, on the ground that the subjunctive is required after *praesertim qui*. The result in both cases is that one of Cicero's favourite rhythms is replaced by one of which there is no example in Cicero's speeches. Since these contain some 17,902 clausulae, the odds are 17,902 to 1 against the proposed emendation. The chief result, however, has been to vindicate a very large number of passages which have been bracketed by editors as mere repetitions. It is quite true that they add little to the sense, but they have metrical value. There is an analogy between prose and lyric poetry, as was pointed out by various ancient writers, and frequently a passage which seems to be otiose is the antistrophe which is demanded by the strophe.

It must further be remembered that the question of rhythm is not confined to the clausula. We are told by Cicero that it pervades the sentence: *numerus est in omni parte verborum* (*Orator*, § 203). The most interesting observation so far made is that Cicero throughout the sentence avoids a dactylic rhythm. Zielinski illustrates by the use of *minari* and *minitari*. Cicero does not say *mūltā mīnārī* or *mūltūm mīnītārī*. The regular use is *mūltūm mīnārī*, but *mūltā mīnītārī*.¹

It would be beyond the scope of this lecture to point out the endless possibilities of research presented by the study of prose-rhythm. In Greek the rhythm of Plato has never been studied. The genuineness of speeches attributed to Demosthenes can be decided when the canon of Demosthenic rhythm has been constructed. In Latin we require a treatise upon Cicero's

¹ *Philologus*, 1906, p. 614.

use of synonyms, the collocation of words in the sentence, and the use of grammatical irregularities for rhythmical effect. The rhythm of Latin historians, notably that of Livy and Tacitus, who set at defiance the Ciceronian rules, calls aloud for investigation. The later writers, whose prose was strictly metrical, must be re-edited, since previous editors have introduced all manner of metrical solecisms. A beginning has already been made by Ziegler in his edition of Firmicus Maternus and C. U. Clark in his edition of Ammianus Marcellinus. The German Universities are pouring out programmes upon the rhythm of different authors. Recently I read a dissertation, covering 102 pages written in Latin, by an American lady, Miss Susan Helen Ballou, for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Giessen, on the clausulae of Flavius Vopiscus. I hardly think Flavius Vopiscus worthy of such attention, but what wonderful enthusiasm! Meanwhile Oxford remains apathetic, and prizes are given for compositions which in structure are barbarous. I fear that there will be no cure until, as we say here, the subject 'comes into Mods.'

I now turn to a subject in which I am much interested, viz. that of omissions in MSS. When we are comparing two allied MSS. the first point to ascertain is, whether one of them omits a passage which is contained in a line, or several lines, of the other, since, if so, we have proof that it is a copy made from the other MS. My own interest in textual criticism dates from a small discovery of this kind, which I made some twenty-five years ago. I was examining a British Museum MS. (Harl. 2682) which, among other things, contains certain extracts from the Verrines, also found in a German MS. generally known as *E* (Berol. 252).

Here a passage omitted by *E* occupies exactly one line in *H*, viz.:

dies ille cum ego hennam nenissem presto mihi sacerdotes Cereris cum infulis ac uerbenis fnerunt contio.

This is proof positive that *E* was copied from the Harleian (*H*). Shortly afterwards *H* has a passage written thus:

libentissime dedit. Mittit etiam trullam gemmeam rogatum, uelle se eam diligentius considerare, ea quoque ei mittitnr. Nunc . . .

Here *E* omits *mittit . . . mittitur*. The eye of the copyist travelled from *dedit* in the line above to *nunc* in the line below.

I have since found this test of great value when I have been trying to unravel the tangled pedigree of various fifteenth-century MSS. Thus a Florentine MS. known as Lag. 24 is shown to be derived in the speeches against Rullus from another MS. in the same library known as Lag. 39, since it omits a passage which occupies one line in Lag. 39, viz.:

Rull. ii. 86 altera Roma quaeretur. In id oppidum homines nefarii rem publicam uestram.

In another speech, *in Pisonem*, § 1, it is shown to have been copied from another MS., Lag. 13. Here the first hand omits a passage which occupies a line in Lag. 13, viz.:

mentis est hic in fraudem homines impulit, hic eos quibus est ignotus.

So also a British Museum MS. of the Verrines, Harl. 4582, is proved to be derived from another Florentine MS., Lag. 29, since in v. 168 it omits the words:

crucem tolleretur. Sed quid ego de Gauio? quasi tu Gauio tum fueris

which form one line in Lag. 29.

Sometimes such omissions are frequent. Thus a Wolfenbüttel MS. of Cicero's speeches (*W*), copied from a Paris MS. (*Σ*), on no less than sixteen occasions omits a line of *Σ*.

We are not often able to compare the original with the copy, but have the copy only. In this case also we can sometimes be sure that the scribe has omitted a line. This is when a word has been mutilated or chopped in two by the omission. I would illustrate by a passage which appeared in the *Globe* of May 1, viz.:

That speculators who dabble in oil shares, and particularly in those of companies possessing individual propositions as distinct from the shares of trust companies, undertake consider-
had further advanced to .970. The directors ex-
of this has just been provided by the Egyptian
group.

A few lines further on we find:

A

telegram received from Gemsah stated that the specific gravity of the oil yielded by Well 13 had further advanced to 970. The directors explained.

Here it is obvious that a line has dropped out after *consider-*. The loss was repaired in a later edition, in which is inserted

*able risks is well known. A striking example*¹

Such mutilated passages are found in most MSS., but are not common. There are, however, a large number of cases where there is no such clue, since the passage is self-contained and not indispensable to the context.

¹ The line which has replaced this is a corrected version (.970 for 970) of one which occurs further on. The substitution is due to the confusion caused by *explained* and *example*.

How then shall we judge if it is true or false, whether it has been omitted by one MS. or interpolated in the other by our old enemy, the *sciolus*? The method generally adopted may be summed up thus: 'Follow the best MS., follow it through thick and thin. If it has a passage not found in other MSS., the passage is genuine. If not, it is the work of a *sciolus*.' This is reinforced by the adage *Brevior lectio potior*.

Let us pause for a moment to consider the causes of omission. One obvious cause is negligence, another is hurry, and a third is ignorance. When a man is writing something which he does not fully understand, he is more likely to omit than if he is following the argument. But in a copyist there is no more blessed quality than ignorance, and it is a commonplace, rather than a paradox, to say that the best MSS. are those written by the most ignorant scribes. Thus the best MS. for Cicero's speeches is the Vaticanus (*V*), which contains the Philippics and certain other speeches. Yet I know of no MS. written by a more ignorant person, or more full of gross and obvious corruptions, which merely testify to its good faith. I cannot understand why critics should be reluctant to admit that their favourite MS. omits passages. The tendency to do so does not affect its good faith, which is really the important virtue in a MS.

It was precisely this MS. *V* which started me upon a line of inquiry which has proved fruitful. I noticed that certain passages omitted by it, and found in the other family of MSS., contained the same number of letters. The suspicion occurred that this number of letters might represent a line in the archetype. I then found that longer passages contained multiples of this unit. The particular unit was 28, and the multiples, e.g.

56, 84, 112, 140. I also found this unit present in passages which had been transposed, also that corruptions due to double readings had a way of getting into the text at intervals corresponding to multiples of the unit. I also found that the same unit was present in the omissions, transpositions and corruptions of the other family (*D*). I could, therefore, no longer doubt that I was on the track of the archetype.

Here I must stop for a moment to inquire the cause of this uniformity. The most ancient MSS. were written in capitals, without any division between the words and with hardly any abbreviations. A simple inspection is enough to show that, as a matter of fact, the lines contain on the average about the same number of letters. I would illustrate from a papyrus (Hibeh 26) written in the third century B.C. Here the figures for twenty lines are 26, 26, 26, 27, 28, 29, 26, 24, 28, 24, 27, 25, 25, 26, 26, 26, 25, 28, 27, 23 = 522. Average 26.

Further, it is usual for a MS. to contain the same number of lines in every page. The consequence is that similar agreements are to be found in the contents of longer divisions, viz. columns, pages and folios. Here I would illustrate from the Ambrosian palimpsest of Cicero (cent. iv). This is written in three columns with 24 lines to the page. The columns are very narrow, containing an average of 11-12 letters. I took the trouble to count the letters in ten pages of this MS., and found some remarkable agreements. Thus pp. 16 and 31 in Peyron's transcript both contain 833 letters: p. 26 has 836: p. 25, 840: pp. 17 and 21, 843. The total for ten pages is 8,446, which gives an average of 844 to a page. The average number of letters in the first column throughout the ten pages is 283, and that for the third column is 282.

I have treated in this way a large number of papyri, palimpsests and MSS. of great antiquity, and find everywhere more or less strongly marked this tendency to uniformity of content. Some of the largest figures are the most remarkable. Thus *V* has a considerable dislocation in the later Philippics due to loose folios in the archetype. Two passages have been transposed, the first of which, according to my reckoning, contains 5,828 and the second 5,826 letters.

These figures will suffice to show that we now have an objective test, founded on arithmetic, which we may apply to suspected passages. If they exhibit the working of a common unit, they cannot be the work of an interpolator, but must represent a genuine tradition.

My work has been chiefly done upon Cicero, and I hope before long to publish the results. Meanwhile the method may be judged from a little book which I recently published on the Primitive Text of the Gospels and Acts.¹ I must remark that I entered upon the inquiry with a general prepossession in favour of Westcott and Hort's Text, and the Revised Text which is based on it. My only object at first was to see whether the two oldest Greek MSS., the Vaticanus (*B*) and the Sinaiticus (*N*), contained any evidence which threw light upon their archetype.

I must here mention that there are three texts of the Gospels and Acts, the most obvious difference between them being their length. The shortest text is found in the two oldest Greek MSS., *B* and *N*, which do not contain e.g. the end of St. Mark, St. John vii. 53–viii. 2, the moving of the waters in the pool of Siloam (John v. 4), the Agony in the Garden, the words of forgiveness from the Cross, and a very large number of other

¹ Oxford, 1914.

passages, including clauses in the Lord's Prayer (Luke xi. 2 and 4). A longer text is found in nearly all other Greek MSS., including some of great antiquity. This stereotyped text is that rendered in our Authorized Version. There is, however, a still longer text, which is generally termed 'Western'. The name is a bad one, since it is found in the East as much as in the West. We have for this only one old Greek, or rather Graeco-Latin MS., the Codex Bezae (*D*), cent. v/vi. It is, however, supported by nearly all the ancient versions, notably the old Latin and the old Syriac, which are said to go back to about 150 A.D. Also, this is the text which is quoted by the oldest Fathers, such as Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Clement of Alexandria. This text contains the passages which are not found in *B* & *N*, also others which have not made their way into the *textus receptus*.

Most biblical critics, including Burgon as well as Hort, are agreed that the 'Western' text was that generally current in the second century A.D. They say, however, that at a very early period the text of the Gospels became incredibly corrupt. Hort's view is that a purer text was preserved somewhere, from which *B* and *N* are descended. More recently some critics have realized that the 'Western' text cannot be disposed of in this way, but while they defend special readings, especially in the Acts, most of them regard the larger additions as a 'congeries of interpolations'.

I must here remark that in the case of New Testament criticism the theory of interpolation reigns supreme. It is always assumed that the writers added, or omitted, passages to suit their own views. The hypothesis of accident has been ignored. Also the rule *brevior lectio potior* has never been pushed to further lengths than

by Hort in the New Testament. Thus, while he rejects all additions to the text found in the 'Western' family, he treats their evidence as sufficient if they omit anything found in other MSS. Thus he rejects St. Luke xxii. 19-20,

'Which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you',

on the ground that the passage is omitted by *D* and *L^a*. He did not notice that there are curious dislocations and omissions here in several members of the 'Western' family, which testify to some confusion in a common ancestor. The particular passage in question contains in the Greek 152 letters, and the Syriac Peshitta immediately above (vv. 17-18 καὶ δεξάμενος . . . ἔλθῃ) omits 152 letters. Are we to call this a mere coincidence?

The examination which I made shows clearly that the text of the Gospels was transmitted in very narrow columns with an average of 10-12 letters to the line. There are examples of this formation among the theological papyri, and it is common in old Latin palimpsests. In the case of short passages the numerical test is not conclusive, since the unit is so small. Proof can only be given by the longest passages. If we find in them the presence of a larger unit, which seems to correspond to some division, i.e. a column or a page in a common ancestor, they can hardly be a congeries of interpolations.

I made a list of all the passages the genuineness of which has been doubted, arranging them in order of length. Most of them are found in the 'Western' family and some in *D* alone.

The five longest are:

(166) Luke v. 14 δὲ ἔξελθὼν ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν καὶ διαφημίζειν τὸν λόγον· ὥστε μηκέτι δύνασθαι αὐτὸν φανερῶς εἰς πόλιν εἰσελθεῖν· ἀλλὰ ἔξω ἦν ἐρήμοις τόποις· καὶ συνήρχοντο πρὸς αὐτόν· καὶ ἦλθεν πάλιν εἰς Καφαρναοῦμ.¹

(167) John v. 4 ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὑδατος κίνησιν· ἄγγελος γὰρ κατὰ καιρὸν κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσε τὸ ὑδωρ· δὲ οὖν πρώτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὑδατος ὑγιῆς ἐγίνετο, φέδηποτε κατείχετο νοσήματι.

(320) Matt. xx. 28 ὑμεῖς δὲ ζητεῖτε ἐκ μικροῦ αὐξῆσαι καὶ ἐκ μείζους ἔλαττον εἶναι· εἰσερχόμενοι δὲ καὶ παρακληθέντες δειπνῆσαι μὴ ἀνακλίνεσθε εἰς τοὺς ἔξεχοντας τόπους, μή ποτε ἐνδοξότερός σους ἐπέλθῃ καὶ προσελθὼν δειπνοκλήτωρ εἴπῃ σοι, "Ἐτι κάτω χώρει, καὶ καταισχυνθήσῃ. ἐὰν δὲ ἀναπέσῃς εἰς τὸν ἥττονα τόπον καὶ ἐπέλθῃ σου ἥττων, καὶ ἔρει σοι δὲ δειπνοκλήτωρ, Σύναγε ἔτι ἄνω, καὶ ἔσται σοι τοῦτο χρήσιμον"

(829) John vii. 53–viii. 11 καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν . . . μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

(964) Mark xvi. 9–20 ἀναστὰς δὲ . . . ἀμήν.

Here it is to be noticed that two passages, 166 and 167, are practically of the same length, while $166 \times 5 = 830$. Also $320 \times 3 = 960$. There are other singular coincidences which I cannot here mention. The only conclusion which seems compatible with these figures is, that the passages defend each other, and that the theory of interpolation is less likely than that of accidental omission. I look upon the numbers 160–167 as representing a page or a column in an archetype, which appears to have contained sixteen lines with an average of eleven letters to the line.

If this is so, the question of the shorter passages assumes a different position. I would illustrate from two examples only.

Luke xxiv. 42. 'And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.'

¹ This passage is peculiar to *D*.

Here the words *καὶ ἀπὸ μελισσῶν κηρίου* are poorly attested, being omitted by *D* as well as *B*. On the other hand, who would have invented such a detail? W.H. remark: ‘a singular interpolation, evidently from an extraneous source, whether written or oral’.

Here it is important to notice that the words contain twenty-one letters, which would occupy two lines in the archetype.

Luke xxiii. 34. ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’ The Greek (*δὲ Ιἱ ἔλεγε, πᾶς ἀφεῖς αὐτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ οἴδασι τί ποιοῦσι*) contains forty-two letters.

Four verses further on comes another suspected passage, ‘In letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew’. Here again the Greek contains forty-three letters.

The text of the New Testament presents analogies to that of Homer. Professor Hunt finds in the oldest papyri a fluid text, which after the revision of Aristarchus became fixed and uniform. The first revision of the Gospels seems to have taken place in Alexandria, and there is good reason for attributing it to the circle of Origen, or possibly to Origen. He is known to have adopted in his edition of the Old Testament the methods of Aristarchus, and is accused by Jerome of corrupting the text by his obels and asterisks. We may, therefore, regard him, or some friend of his, as the Aristarchus of the Gospels. The method followed by the reviser responsible for the *B* text was *brevior lectio potior*, and he struck out passages omitted by MSS. which he thought accurate, without asking if the omission might not be due to accident. Subsequent revisers, who constructed the *textus receptus*, reversed his proceedings and restored a number of the banished passages.

The primitive text of Homer is to be found in the quotations of Aeschines, Plato, and other ancient writers,

also in the papyri of the third century B.C.: that of the Gospels in the quotations of the Early Fathers, the oldest versions, and in the Codex Bezae.

I fear that I have strayed from the realm of Latin literature with which I should deal on this occasion. I would only say that the method which I have used was developed in the course of a minute and protracted study of Ciceronian MSS., and that I hope shortly to publish my results. If I had given examples from Cicero, you might have thought that it was hardly worth while to add fresh words to one who was already somewhat prolix and redundant. The method can be applied to all ancient prose works, so I give illustrations from that text which has been most fiercely contested.

